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BENGALURU • TUESDAY • DECEMBER 16, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

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David Miller

Liam Livingstone

BIG PAY DAY AWAITS STARS AT IPL 2026 MINI AUCTION

Ten franchies will be looking to fill the available 77 spots during the auction at the Etihad Arena, Abu Dhabi on Tuesday

CHENNAI, KOLKATA LOOK TO REBOOT

After a forgettable season in 2025, Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders will be looking to form a core group of players in the mini auction. It, however, will not be easy with the available pool of players. Both teams will need at least six-seven international stars, Indian and overseas, to fulfil various roles before signing back-ups

EYES ON ALL-ROUNDERS AND FINISHERS

- Australian all-rounder Cameron Green and India international Venkatesh Iyer are expected to go for big money for their dynamic skills and proven credentials at the highest level
- Liam Livingstone and David Miller are the kind of explosive finishers teams will not hesitate to spend significant money on | **P15**

₹64.3 CR

KKR HAVE THE HIGHEST PURSE GOING INTO THE AUCTION

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

adani Presents THE SUNDAY STANDARD DEVI AWARDS Powered By PARAS

DEVIS ALL

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, The New Indian Express group CMD Manoj Kumar Sonthalia, CEO Lakshmi Menon, Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla, Editor Santwana Bhattacharya and Dinamani Editor K Vaidiyanathan with Devi Award winners Anita Kundu, Archana Jahagirdar, Dr Meenakshi Jain, Dr Radhika Batra, Rina Dhaka, Shradha Sharma, Simran Sharma, Smita Prakash, Sudha Bhattacharya and Sonia Mathur in New Delhi on Monday | PARVEEN NEGI | **P9**

● REVAMPED BILL TO BE TABLED IN LS TODAY ● EXPECTED TO GO TO A STANDING COMMITTEE

Oppn raps 60:40 funding plan for rural job scheme

We will not allow the rights of millions of people to be snatched away by this govt
— Mallikarjun Kharge

"125 days" is the headline. 60:40 is the fine print... Cost-shifting by stealth, not reform
— John Brittas

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH the government all set to introduce a bill to repeal the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and replace it with a new rural employment law on Tuesday, the Opposition launched a blistering attack for diluting the scheme and burdening the exchequer of all states.

Though the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025, was listed in the Lok Sabha in the supplementary list of business for Monday, the government held it back after Opposition protests. According to sources, the government has assured the Opposition in the Business Council Meeting that the proposed legislation will be sent to the standing committee.

One of the key criticisms is that the bill proposes the Centre and states/Union territories to share its cost in a 60:40 ratio. However, for North-Eastern and Himalayan states, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and J&K, the existing funding pattern of 90:10 between the Centre and the states will stay.

Under the MGNREGA framework, the Centre bears the full cost of wages for unskilled manual work, up to three-fourths of material costs, and three-fourths of wages for skilled and semi-skilled workers. While the new bill alters the funding structure, it retains the existing wage rates as notified under Section 6 of the MGNREGA.

The bill seeks to establish a "rural development framework aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047", by providing a statutory guarantee of 125 days of employment in every financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work.

Criticising the proposed bill, CPI (M) Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas alleged that that the government removed the soul of a rights-based guarantee law and replaced it with a conditional, Centrally controlled scheme stacked against states and workers.

Single higher edu regulator bill to be sent to JPC

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AMID fierce protests and objections by the Opposition members, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday introduced the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill in the Lok Sabha. Pradhan introduced the bill, which seeks to set up a 13-member body to regulate institutions of higher education, amid din over alleged threatening slogans raised against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a Congress rally on Sunday.

As soon as the bill was introduced, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju rose to say since it is a comprehensive Bill, the government would like to send it to the joint committee of both Houses for perusal.

The bill proposes to establish an overarching higher education commission along with three councils for regulation, accreditation and ensuring academic standards for universities and higher education institutions. With a single regulator, it also seeks to tackle the challenges faced by higher educational institutions due to multiplicity of regulators.

The higher education commission, which will be led by a chairperson appointed by the President of India, will cover all central universities and colleges under it, and institutes of national importance functioning under the administrative purview of the Ministry of Education including IITs, NITs, IISc, IISERs, IIMs, and IIITs.

Trying to flee cops, woman falls from 4th floor of hotel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A 21-year-old woman, who was allegedly drunk at a party in a hotel, was critically injured after she accidentally fell from the fourth floor of the hotel while trying to slither down by holding on to the sewage pipe after the police arrived at the scene. The police was at the spot after a neighbour complained about noise and disturbance from the hotel room.

The incident occurred at the hotel situated at AECS Layout under the HAL police station limits in the early hours of Sunday.

The woman, Vaishnavi (21), works at a private firm and was staying at a PG accommodation in Kundalahalli. She and her seven friends, including three women, had organised themselves a party at the hotel. They had booked three rooms on the fourth floor of the hotel late at night. Around 3 am on Sunday, all eight were partying in the same room and it continued till 5.30 am. The neighbour complained to the police control room about loud music and noise, following which the Hoysala patrolling police rushed to the hotel and conducted an inspection.

The police said the group was playing loud music, singing songs and was under the influence of alcohol. The police recorded videos on their tablets, questioned the group, and scolded them for disturbing residents late at night. They asked the group to produce their Aadhaar cards. As two of the men accompanied the police personnel to the hotel reception, Vaishnavi reportedly went to the balcony of the room and tried to climb down holding on to the sewage pipe. She lost her balance and fell from the fourth floor onto the compound grill, sustaining serious injuries. **P5**

GIVING THE CHILLS

At 13.3°C, city sees lowest min temp in 8 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IT is not just the dip in night temperatures that is making people feel the chill, but the drop in day temperatures too.

As per data available with the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru recorded the minimum temperature of 13.3 degrees Celsius on December 13, 2025. This is the lowest minimum the city has recorded in the last eight years.

The lowest minimum ever recorded in December was 8.9 degrees Celsius on December 29, 1883. A minimum of 12 degrees Celsius was reported on December 11, 2016 and 12.8 degrees Celsius on December 24, 2011. On December 16, 2013, the city recorded the minimum at 13.6 degrees Celsius and on December 18, 2018, 13.7 degrees Celsius.

IMD officials said day temperatures in Bengaluru and other parts of south-interior Karnataka will dip further in the coming days. They also forecast light drizzle in some parts of the region over the next few days. **P2**

Dense fog delays 48 flights at KIA

Bengaluru: As many as 48 flights were delayed due to dense fog at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on Monday morning. The fog was triggered by the minimum temperature of 12.5 degrees Celsius recorded at the airport. Of the 48 delayed flights, 46 were domestic and the remaining international | **P2**

EXPRESS READ

Shamanur laid to rest with state honours

Davanagere: Former minister Shamanur Shivashankarappa was laid to rest with full state honours at the Kalleshwara Rice Mill here on Monday evening. Thousands of people, politicians and other dignitaries were present | **P6**

Pahalgam attack: NIA names 4 Pak nationals

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a comprehensive chargesheet in the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam against seven accused, including four Pakistani nationals | **P10**

S'PORE, CANADA, UK ISSUE DELHI AIR QUALITY ALERT

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

SINGAPORE, the UK and Canada have issued advisories cautioning their citizens about hazardous air quality in Delhi as pollution levels in the national capital worsened sharply, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) nearing 500 and remaining in the "severe" category.

The latest advisory came from the Singapore High Commission in New Delhi, which on Monday issued an air quality warning for its nationals in the Delhi-NCR region following the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) invocation of Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). This marks the first known instance of a foreign mission in Delhi issuing a pollution-specific advisory.

Singapore urged its nationals to follow guidelines issued by India, including staying indoors as much as possible, wearing masks when outdoors, and taking additional precautions. The UK warned travelers about the health risks posed by air pollution in north India. Canada issued similar guidance to its nationals.

Under GRAP Stage 4, authorities have imposed the strictest control measures.

TRAVEL DISRUPTIONS

The Singapore advisory also flagged possible travel disruptions. "We also note that given the low visibility, flights to and from the Delhi-NCR are likely to be affected... Travellers should check with the respective airlines for updates."

BATTLE TOURISM

Cho La, Dok La passes opened for public

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

INDIA on Monday formally opened the historic Cho La and Dok La passes in Sikkim, launching regulated battlefield tourism along the sensitive border with China.

Dok La pass is in Doklam m plateau, which shot into limelight in 2017 during a prolonged standoff between Indian and Chinese troops, while Cho La witnessed fierce clashes in 1967. The Northeast hosts numerous such historic sites, especially in Arunachal Pradesh.

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang flagged off 25 motorbikes and vehicles, inaugurating access to the passes under the 'Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan' initiative. A collaborative effort between the Army and Ministry of Tourism, Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan enables citizens to explore iconic war zones and sites of military valour.

"To boost accessibility and public awareness, the Ministry of Tourism and Army collaborated to transform these sites into sustainable tourism destinations," the Ministry stated.

The scheme opens vital border zones to regulated tourism, highlighting their significance
— Sikkim CM